to the cities. Certainly, however, most of the Chinese have been and are supported directly by farming and by the occupations immediately connected with it. The devotion to agriculture has been furthered, as was suggested in the first chapter, by natural environment. Much of China's soil is very fertile, especially in the great deltas of the Yangtze and Huang Ho, and in some of the smaller river valleys. Moreover, agriculture has been held in honor. The farmer has ranked high in the social scale. The Emperor officially opened the spring by ceremonial ploughing, and magistrates throughout the Empire were supposed to perform a similar rite.

The absorption of so large a proportion of the population in the task of raising food and the raw materials for clothing is an indication of the nature of agricultural methods. These are marked by the intensive application of human labor and a paucity of machinery. Agriculture is more akin to gardening than to farming. Machinery there is—from the standpoint of the modern West simple and some of it crude—and the use of draught animals. By far the major part of the work, however, is performed by human beings. Even on larger farms, where animals can be and are employed more extensively than on smaller ones, as a rule more than half the labor is by human hands.

Along with intensive cultivation by man-power are some other characteristics. Most of the units are small. In at least many sections the majority of these are farmed by their owners, and although there are renters—in some regions heavily burdened—practically all the laborers are free. Under the Manchus there was very little of slavery or of binding the peasant to the soil in semi-free serfdom.

Some of these generalizations require elaboration. The units of cultivation were usually small. No accurate survey has been made for all China, and holdings naturally vary in size with the character of the soil, the kind of crops raised, the water supply, and the human factor which in places amasses large estates. One survey of the last decade of portions of six provinces in North and East Central China gives the average size of nearly twenty-four hundred farms as a little over five acres, varying from an average of slightly over ten acres in two *hsien* in Anhui to about two and a half acres in one *hsien* in Fukien. Another survey made